

·WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of executing an output image generating operation job that is requested from a client device in an output operation execution system that is connected with the client device via a network, the method comprises the steps of:

(a) providing within the output operation execution system a paid operation queue for registering orders of paid operation jobs and a trial operation queue for entering an order of charge-free trial operation jobs;

10 (b) receiving from the client device a request for execution of either a paid operation job or a trial operation job;

(c) entering the requested operation job into either the paid operation queue or the trial operation queue;

15 (d) selecting an operation job to be executed while giving priority to the paid operation jobs into the paid operation queue over the trial operation jobs into the trial operation queue;

(e) generating image output data by executing the selected operation job, and storing the image output data into a storage device of the output operation execution system;

20 (f) if the executed operation job is a paid operation job, the output operation execution system transferring the image output data to the client device without undesired modification; and

(g) if the executed operation job is a trial operation job, the output operation execution system adds to the image output data a trial-job mark indicating that the image output data has been made by trial operation, and transferring the image output data to the client device.

2. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

receiving an application for a paid operation service contract from a

30 user who has requested a trial operation job and making the paid operation service contract;

receiving from the client device that is used by the user who has the paid operation service a request for retransfer of the image output data that was executed and generated previously as the trial operation job; and

5 in response to the request for retransfer, transferring the image output data that is stored in the storage device to the client device without adding the trial-job mark.

10 3. A method according to Claim 2, further comprising the steps of:  
setting a term of validity for the image output data that is stored in  
the storage device;

retaining the image output data in the storage device while the data is within the term of validity; and

15 in response to the request from the user who is in use of the client device, transferring to the client device valid term information indicating whether or not the image output data of the operation job that was executed for the user is within the term of validity.

20 4. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:  
setting a term of validity for the image output data that is stored in  
the storage device;

retaining the image output data in the storage device while the data is within the term of validity; and

25 in response to the request from the user who is in use of the client device, transferring to the client device valid term information indicating whether or not the image output data of the operation job that was executed for the user is within the term of validity.

5. An output operation execution system that is connected with a client device via a network, comprising:

30 a paid operation queue for registering orders of paid operation jobs and a trial operation queue for registering orders of charge-free trial operation

jobs;

an operation queue entry module that receives from the client device a request for execution of either a paid operation job or a trial operation job and enters the requested operation job in either the paid operation queue or

5 the trial operation queue;

an operation job selecting module that selects an operation job to be executed while giving priority to the paid operation jobs in the paid operation queue over the trial operation jobs in the trial operation queue;

10 an operation execution module that executes the selected operation job and to generate image output data;

a storage device for storing the image output data; and

15 an output data transfer module that transfers the output image data to the client without undesired modification if the operation job executed in the operation execution module is a paid operation job, and that transfers the output image data to the client with a trial-job mark indicating that the image output data has been made by trial operation if the executed operation job is a trial operation job.

6. An output operation execution system according to Claim 5,  
20 further comprising:

a user entry module that receives an application for a paid operation service contract from a user who has requested a trial operation job and makes the paid operation service contract,

wherein upon receiving from the client device that is used by the  
25 user who has the paid operation service contract a request for retransfer of the image output data that was executed and generated previously as the trial operation job, the output data transfer module transfers the image output data that is stored in the storage device to the client device without adding the trial-job mark.

30

7. An output operation execution system according to Claim 6,

· wherein the output data transfer module performs:

setting a term of validity for the image output data that is stored in the storage device, and retaining the image output data in the storage device while the data is within the term of validity; and

5               in response to the request from the user who is in use of the client device, transferring to the client device valid term information indicating whether or not the image output data of the operation job that was executed for the user is within the term of validity.

10              8. An output operation execution system according to Claim 5, wherein the output data transfer module performs:

setting a term of validity for the image output data that is stored in the storage device, and retaining the image output data in the storage device while the data is within the term of validity; and

15              in response to the request from the user who is in use of the client device, transferring to the client device valid term information indicating whether or not the image output data of the operation job that was executed for the user is within the term of validity.

20              9. A computer program product for use in an output operation execution system, the output operation execution system including a computer that is connected with a client device via a network, comprising:

a computer readable medium; and

25              a computer program stored on the computer readable medium, the computer program including:

a first program for causing a computer to set a paid operation queue for registering orders of paid operation jobs and a trial operation queue for registering orders of charge-free trial operation jobs;

30              a second program for causing the computer to receive from the client device a request for execution of either a paid operation job or a trial operation job and entering the requested operation job in either the paid operation queue

or the trial operation queue;

a third program for causing the computer to select an operation job to be executed while giving priority to the paid operation jobs in the paid operation queue over the trial operation jobs in the trial operation queue;

5 a fourth program for causing the computer to generate image output data by executing the selected operation job, and to store the image output data into a storage device; and

a fifth program for causing the computer to transfer the output image data to the client without undesired modification if the operation job 10 executed in the operation execution module is a paid operation job, and to transfer the output image data to the client with a trial-job mark indicating that the image output data has been made by trial operation if the executed operation job is a trial operation job .

15 10. A computer program product according to Claim 9, further comprising:

a sixth program for causing the computer to receive an application for a paid operation service contract from a user who has requested a trial operation job and makes the paid operation service contract,

20 wherein upon receiving from the client device that is used by the user who has the paid operation service contract a request for retransfer of the image output data that was executed and generated previously as the trial operation job, the fifth program causes the computer to transfer the image output data that is stored in the storage device to the client device without 25 adding the trial-job mark.

11. A computer program product according to Claim 10, wherein the fifth program implements the functions of:

30 setting a term of validity for the image output data that is stored in the storage device, and retaining the image output data in the storage device while the data is within the term of validity; and

in response to the request from the user who is in use of the client device, transferring to the client device valid term information indicating whether or not the image output data of the operation job that was executed for the user is within the term of validity.

5

12. A computer program product according to Claim 9, wherein the fifth program implements the functions of:

setting a term of validity for the image output data that is stored in the storage device, and retaining the image output data in the storage device while the data is within the term of validity; and

in response to the request from the user who is in use of the client device, transferring to the client device valid term information indicating whether or not the image output data of the operation job that was executed for the user is within the term of validity.

10  
15